

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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MEMORANDUM

GROMYKO'S LIKELY APPROACH IN TALKS WITH SECRETARY SHULTZ

Summary

In the absence of specific issues to be negotiated with you, Foreign Minister Gromyko's principal objective will be to take your measure, probe for differences on important issues between you and your predecessor, and to state forcefully Soviet criticism of U.S. policies while defending the Soviets'. In view of the present state of U.S.-Soviet relations, he will be unyielding and tough on substance--but, characteristically, personally courteous and restrained. Arms control, U.S. economic sanctions, and the Middle East are likely to be high on his agenda.

Background

Your meeting with Foreign Minister Gromyko will be occurring against a backdrop of continuing problems for the USSR. Recent events in Poland have refocused world attention on Moscow's role there. The Soviets remain bogged down in Afghanistan and are frustrated by their virtual exclusion from the recent Middle East crisis. They are pessimistic that

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there will be any progress soon in either the START or INF talks. At the same time, they see the U.S. pressing ahead on new defense programs of great significance to them. This bleak picture will be offset only a little by Moscow's perception of U.S. problems, particularly the increased divisiveness within the Western alliance over INF deployment and stemming from the U.S. pipeline sanctions.

On the domestic side, the economy is also a source of concern to the Soviets. Hard currency stringencies appear to be making the Soviets more cautious about expanding aid commitments abroad. More importantly, the succession process is clearly underway with Andropov moving out in front of Kirilenko and Chernenko in the contest for Brezhnev's mantle. Nevertheless, Gromyko will meet you as the representative of a Politbureau generally united on basic policy issues and eager at this sensitive time to convey an image of unity and singleness of mind on foreign policy issues. At the same time, the unsettled state of leadership politics probably ensures that Gromyko's script will not include any significant departures from past Soviet positions.

The recent public line offered by Soviet officials and analysts reflects a generally pessimistic consensus about relations with the United States, and that pessimism appears to be deepening. Some officials, like General Staff Chief Ogarkov have asserted that within U.S. policy there is a "dangerous trend" toward the "material preparation for a new war." Other observers profess to believe that a number of social and economic factors in the United States impede Washington's "militaristic designs." Still others, like the USA Institute director, Georgiy Arbatov, seem to believe that a broad political strategy to cultivate foreign resistance to U.S. policies is possible. These nuances aside, however, Soviet commentators agree that U.S.-Soviet relations are at a low ebb and no Soviet spokesman is publicly suggesting that the pursuit of Soviet goals through improved U.S.-Soviet relations is possible at this time.

Moscow has been restrained in its comments on you. A 29 August Pravda article, for example, noted that you have brought a "new lower key style to the conduct of U.S. foreign policy" but concluded that there has been no change in substance.

Assessing and Testing the New Secretary of State

Given Moscow's general pessimism on the bilateral relationship and the limits on Gromyko's flexibility imposed by the Soviet political situation, he probably will have little of substance to offer. Rather, his main objective probably will be to take stock of you to determine if your appointment portends change in the atmospherics, if not the substance, of U.S. policy toward the USSR.

Gromyko may solicit your personal views on such topics as arms control, the Middle East and East-West trade in order to detect possible differences in style, nuance or possibly substance between yourself and other members of the administration.

Gromyko will be sensitive to any hints of change or flexibility in U.S. policy. In this context, he will be especially interested to see if--and how--you reiterate the administration's linkage policy. He may seek to elicit your views not only on specific issues but will probe to see if progress is possible on such key issues as START and INF--without unacceptable concessions on other foreign or domestic policy issues.

Gromyko may employ various approaches in seeking to draw you out on these issues. He will almost certainly offer the ritualistic diatribe against U.S. policies. This may, however, be complemented by a different tack. He could take a personal approach and try to appeal to your "realism" and your "business experience" to argue that you and he represent the realistic approaches in the U.S. and USSR and that you share a mutual interest in containing the dangers of misunderstanding and confrontation.

The Critique of U.S. Policies

A highly polemical attack on U.S. policies is an almost obligatory component of Gromyko's style. During this attack, he is likely to present the current "Soviet line" as outlined in authoritative press commentary. Among the issues which may be included are:

- U.S. Military Policies: He might point to alleged U.S. public statements about the "winnability" of nuclear war and the defense budget increases as developments which call into question U.S. intentions. In contrast, he would portray Soviet doctrine as defensive, as

evidenced by Brezhnev's pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

- Impasse in Arms Talks: Similarly, Gromyko probably will bring up the lack of progress through the last rounds of the INF and START talks. He probably will argue that U.S. adherence to its "zero option" and deep cut proposals belie Washington's desire to delay any arms accord until the deployment of new intermediate range systems in Europe. He may cite INF deployment--together with the M-X, Trident II and the B-1--as evidence of an alleged U.S. desire to gain strategic superiority over the USSR and to create a "first strike" capability.
- U.S. Policy in the Middle East: Gromyko will probably charge that the United States has irresponsibly supported the Israeli intervention in Lebanon and that this could destabilize the region and ultimately lead to a serious superpower confrontation. In this connection, he could seek to portray the introduction of U.S. Marines and military forces from countries allied with the U.S. as unilateral behavior of a kind the U.S. has condemned when exercised by the USSR. He may note that U.S. efforts to resolve Middle East issues without Soviet involvement are doomed and may raise Brezhnev's proposal for a Middle East conference.

He probably will say that a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon is essential to resolution of the problem while arguing that a Syrian departure is up to the Arabs.

- U.S.-Soviet Bilateral Relations: Gromyko may claim that the U.S. bears responsibility for the significant downturn in U.S.-Soviet relations. He may argue that the pipeline embargo and trade restraints have had little impact on the Soviet Union but that such economic measures reflect a warlike mentality in dealing with the USSR. As in a public statement last June, Gromyko probably will say that the U.S. is trying to destroy the few bridges remaining between East and West.

Possible Topics on Gromyko's Agenda

Gromyko's own agenda probably will be very limited, although surprises cannot be entirely ruled out. He may touch

on some "business questions" related to the current diplomatic encounters over the Soviet consulate in Glen Cove and the activities of our embassy in Moscow. (Two embassy officers recently were forcibly prevented by Soviet police from meeting with a Soviet dissident.)

Gromyko may also test the waters on more important issues. On arms control, for example, he could raise the idea--voiced by Soviet negotiators in Geneva--that we are rapidly approaching a watershed in Soviet-American relations. He would then argue that a major rupture could be avoided if some progress were made at the INF talks. With a NATO ministerial meeting this December intended to reaffirm the allies' decision to deploy new INF weapons, Gromyko may argue that the upcoming round in Geneva is critical if a complete breakdown in the U.S.-Soviet dialogue is to be avoided.

To demonstrate Moscow's "constructive approach" to arms-related issues, Gromyko may explore areas outside of INF and START in which some progress could be made. In this context, he may emphasize the need for both sides to preserve the existing ABM treaty or appeal for renewal of the comprehensive test ban talks. Gromyko could also highlight the responsibilities assumed by the U.S. and the USSR in connection with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and cite the Pakistanis' potential for testing nuclear arms as a development which demonstrates the need for U.S.-Soviet cooperation in this field. On regional issues, Gromyko could hold out a vague offer of Soviet "cooperation" in areas of lesser priority to Moscow such as Namibia, but more likely would expect you to raise that topic.

There is a possibility that Gromyko would raise the issue of a summit during these talks, if only to bolster an argument about the continuing unity of the Soviet leadership. Although unlikely, the Soviets also could try to disarm the U.S. on the eve of the talks by publicly announcing a new, repackaged INF or START initiative, or by testing one of the new intercontinental missiles they have been developing.

Gromyko's Responses to Your Initiatives

Gromyko probably anticipates that you will raise a number of issues concerning Soviet activities, but he probably will be defensive in his responses and have little of substance to offer. If you level a general charge of Soviet aggressiveness, Gromyko might claim that Moscow's relatively

restrained approach to the recent Falklands and Lebanese crises manifests the USSR's interest in peaceful, non-combative resolution of disputes.

Poland: If you bring up recent events in Poland, Gromyko probably will assail the U.S. for alleged interference and argue that the Polish situation offers no legitimate basis for U.S. curtailment of East-West trade. He may point to U.S. signature of the 1975 Helsinki Accords, which--he would allege--codified Moscow's "stake" in Poland. He would also maintain that the government in Poland--not Moscow--calls the shots in Warsaw and that sanctions against the USSR are not relevant to the situation there.

Afghanistan: Gromyko will probably point to the Soviet decision to agree to private U.S.-Soviet talks on Afghanistan last July as a token of Soviet sincerity on this issue, but he is unlikely to go beyond that initiative (despite the military difficulties that the Soviets are experiencing). He may argue that further progress on this issue can only occur when Washington ceases its support to the Afghan rebels.

Cuba/Central America: If pressed on this issue, Gromyko will probably argue that increased military deliveries to Cuba are a legitimate response to U.S. threats and activity in the region. He may cite the recent Symms amendment as a symbol of this "threatening U.S. posture." As for the insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala, he would point to the local causes of this instability, cite U.S. backing for the "reactionary governments" in those countries, and disavow any Soviet role in fomenting the insurgencies there.

Southern Africa/Angola/Namibia: After attacking U.S. "collusion" with South Africa in efforts to destabilize the Frontline States, Gromyko probably will claim that Moscow has not acted to obstruct U.S. negotiations on Namibia. He could cite Soviet concurrence with the 4 February Cuban-Angolan communique which stated that the removal of Cuban forces from Angola could be considered once South African forces were removed from Angola and Namibia, in order to indicate that Moscow is not opposed to eventual resolution of this issue. If Moscow's public line that the Western Contact Group initiative is going nowhere reflects the leadership's true perception, he would have little to lose by hinting that Moscow could cease to press the Angolans and SWAPO to oppose the U.S.-brokered Namibia settlement.

Soviet Domestic Issues: You can expect Gromyko to take a generally tough line on domestic issues such as human rights and dissidents. Should you raise questions about the Pentacostals in the U.S. embassy, Gromyko probably will respond that: this is a U.S. problem; it could be easily resolved if the embassy were to stop giving refuge to these people; and the ultimate disposition of the case will be decided in accordance with Soviet law.

New U.S. Initiatives

Should the U.S. offer some dramatic initiative not previously surfaced with the Soviets, Gromyko could show distinct interest--even if being cynical about U.S. motivations--and probably will keep the door open by indicating that Moscow will give the matter consideration.

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